



# Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Lewiston Public Meeting  
June 23, 2011  
Lewis Clark College  
7 pm

**Chairman Andersen** called the meeting to order, welcomed the audience, and explained that this second citizen's commission is charged with redistricting the Legislative and Congressional Districts for the state. He also pointed out that these public hearings are for the commission to gather input from the citizens to help them in making decisions in drawing these lines which will be in effect for the next 10 years.

He then had the commissioners introduce themselves as follows; **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, **Commissioner Allen Andersen** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Evan Frasure** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from Rathdrum, and **Commissioner Lou Esposito** from Boise. Also present from the staff were **Cyd Gaudet** and **Kristin Ford**.

**Commissioner Kane** then discussed the parameters under which the commission will be working. She explained that redistricting must be done every 10 years after the census. She explained that over the last ten years that Idaho has grown 22%, most of which has been in the urban areas, and that for these reasons some of the rural districts will have to grow geographically to get to the one person = one vote requirement pursuant to the constitution. She also explained that by state statute the commission can create 30 to 35 districts which have to be even within a 10% deviation. **Commissioner Kane** advised the audience that ten years ago the Idaho Supreme Court turned two of the commission's plans away because they were barely over the 10% deviation. Further requirements are that the commission shall preserve neighborhoods and local communities of interest, they shall avoid drawing oddly shaped districts, they should keep counties intact whenever possible, and that if counties are divided they must be adjoined and connected by a state road. The commission must also avoid dividing precincts and cannot consider incumbents or their respective political parties.

**Chairman Andersen** explained that the commission has 90 days, or until September 4th, to submit their plan and that as such they have a very tight time line and will be working really hard to complete their task. He also advised the audience that the commission wants to obtain a unanimous decision on their final map. He also explained that this commission has expanded the number of public hearings, from ten years ago, to get as much public input as possible. He then discussed the website where the public can draw maps based on the census numbers. He also advised that the commission will take verbal and written comments, and that the public can also email comments to be included in the record for consideration. **Chairman Andersen** also thanked Idaho Public TV for streaming the public hearings.

First called to testify was **Skip Brandt**, a former Senator and now an Idaho County Commissioner. He explained that he ran in District 7 which encompassed all of Lewis and Clearwater Counties, Benewah County, half of Idaho County, 4 precincts in Nez Perce County, and 3 precincts in Latah County, and this was a good match. St. Maries has a lot in common with Orofino. He explained that once you get below Idaho County you are into another time zone and it is a completely different part of the state. They get their television and news from Boise, and up north we get it from Lewiston and Spokane. I never could get the time change straight. He asked that the commission pay attention to the break at the bottom of Idaho County and explained that the distance included in a district is important as it makes it hard to provide good representation. Regarding communities of interest, he noted the urban – rural split and suggested that Lewiston and Moscow can relate to each other because they are both densely populated and are both college towns. He also asked the commission to keep rural communities together as much as possible. **Commissioner Frasure** asked **Mr. Brandt** to elaborate on any population centers within his prior district and **Mr. Brandt** indicated that there really weren't any.

Next called was **Patti Weeks**, the Nez Perce County Clerk since 1999. She stated that the most important thing is to keep Nez Perce County whole. As there is not quite enough population in the county she suggested that Lewis County would be a good fit to join with them as they share a history (Lewis County used to be part of Nez Perce County) and a lot of commonalities in shopping, groceries, and medical services. She also indicated that Highway 95 connects them, they have the same newspaper, ambulance, and they are a community. **Ms. Weeks** indicated that they have been looking at precinct boundaries and in trying to save money they are going to combine some precincts, and will try to align precincts within the taxing district. **Commissioner Frasure** then explained that it is a challenge for the commission to use city boundaries as they are constantly changing, and asked if the City of Lewiston is growing. **Ms. Weeks** explained that at this time expansion seems to be in the Cougar Ridge area not in the city. **Commissioner Kane** then asked when they redraw precinct lines what boundaries they will use in doing so. **Ms. Weeks** explained that other than a few lines, the precinct boundaries have not changed in decades. She now indicated that there is now an opportunity to consolidate precincts to save money and they want to draw them along the lines of the taxing districts. She explained that none of the precincts will be over 1,000 people and some of the rural areas maybe about 200 people; however they will wait for the commission and then adjust accordingly. In answer to a question from **Commissioner Moses**, **Ms. Weeks** indicated that they are looking for fixed landmarks to draw their lines. **Commissioner Kane** asked if the taxing districts have been consolidated, and **Ms. Weeks** answered that they now do all of the elections for everyone. **Commissioner Frasure** inquired about the figures that she cited, and she clarified that in the clerk's office, they use voter registration numbers, not census numbers. **Commissioner Andersen** commented that as long as the number of registered voters does not exceed the census numbers, we are okay.

**Representative John Rusche** from Lewiston, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, was next to testify. He expressed his appreciation that the commissions, and not legislators, are now drawing the lines, because even the best-intentioned legislators have a hard time staying at arms-length when their careers are at stake. He indicated that the commission's major decision will be on the division of counties, cities and markets. He urged the commission to not divide urban areas unnecessarily just to make the district numbers work, as future growth will likely happen near cities. He indicated that in this way some districts may be large and look ugly however there is no way they can make them pretty. He also urged the commission to give less weight to the requirement that a state road join an entire district, because the needs of individuals to be represented take priority over the ease of a candidate to travel around his district.

**Pete Gerlonson** then testified that in recently running for office he learned that they have a connection with Lewis County. The county seat of Lewis County is Nez Perce; the county seat of Nez Perce County is Lewiston. He urged the commission to take care of the requirement that the districts have a state road that connects the district. He also indicated that the numbers in Lewis and Nez Perce Counties fit. He also asked that the commission consider people first and political parties not at all.

**Darren Williams**, who works for the Nez Perce tribe, was next to testify on behalf of the tribal executive committee. He gave the commission some background on the tribe, and explained that parts of the reservation are in 5 counties and cover 750,000 acres. He explained that it is now in Congressional District 1, with parts of it in Legislative Districts 6, 7 and 8. He explained that the tribe feels a connection with districts 6 and 7 as they include the casino, and the tribal headquarters are there. He also explained that they have a connection with the City of Lewiston in terms of employment and commerce. However he explained that the portion of the reservation in District 8 seldom receives a visit from any elected representative from that district. It's hard to travel from Donnelly and McCall to get to the reservation. The tribe does not expect that their entire reservation be contained in one district, but he asked that the commission give consideration to adjusting the district lines so that the reservation's representation not be diluted. In answer to a question by **Commissioner Andersen** regarding historical voting turnout by the tribe, **Mr. Williams** indicated that the voting numbers during a presidential election are higher than during the midterm elections although the tribal members are encouraged to get out the vote.

Next to address the commission was **Jim Downey**, Chairman of the Nez Perce County Democrats. He expressed appreciation for the bipartisan commission and that they make decisions based on numbers and not on politics. He encouraged the commission to consider District 7 as a community of interest. It is now one district and one county, but it did not increase enough to remain one district, so it appears we must look at adjoining counties. He will be submitting a map through Maptitude, and encourages other people to go to the commission's excellent web site.

**Senator Sheryl Nuxoll** next indicated that her concern is that if rural communities are put in with urban communities they will be overpowered. She indicated that rural communities deserve rural representation. Rural communities will not survive if too many regulations are imposed on them by urban interests. She explained that Idaho County has a proposal that she supports which puts the tribe in one district.

Next to testify was **Marge Arnzen** who is the Idaho County Central Committee Chairman. She proposed a district which puts Idaho, Lewis, and Clearwater Counties, and 40% of Nez Perce County together. This plan was approved by their whole committee. **Ms. Arnzen** advised that this map has been submitted on the website.

**Paula Bauer** then addressed the commission and explained her perspective that while commerce is a consideration in drawing districts it should be a minor consideration. Where you shop does not create a community. She asked that the commission consider the rural lifestyle that some people are looking for and to use urban and rural communities to determine communities. She advised that although the two universities do have different missions they do share common interests and suggested that the commission keep rural areas together and Moscow and Lewiston together. In answer to a question from **Commissioner Moses** regarding their directive to keep counties together, **Ms. Bauer** suggested that many counties are already divided into legislative districts, which does not affect county governments. Preserving the voice of rural people is more important than keeping counties together. **Commissioner Frasure** then asked about the portion of her plan which divides a portion of Lewiston into the rural area. Why that particular part of Lewiston? **Ms. Bauer** indicated that this was not her map so she could not answer questions about it, she will go onto the website and submit a map.

**Joann Mider**, who lives in rural Kamiah, explained that she has nothing in common with people that live in Lewiston. She indicated that rural people want rural representatives that can relate to them.

Next to address the commission was **LuAnn Cullen**, regional chairman for the Republican Party, and raised in the Lewiston Orchards area. She stated that she came up with the maps that several people have referred to. She indicated that she cares about having representatives that represent the rural areas. She advised the commission that if Kamiah and Nez Perce are connected it is very hard to get from one to the other without going through Clearwater County. Similarly, it is the same if Clearwater and Latah are connected; you have to drive through Nez Perce County to get there. She said that she constantly hears that the people in Heck and Lenore don't feel represented by Lewiston and feel they have more in common with Orofino. She also stated that she feels that the neighborhoods in the Orchards in Lewiston are more rural than the rest of Lewiston, and that is why she placed that part of Lewiston in with a rural district. She would also like to see the Nez Perce Tribe all in one district instead of split up in three districts, so they would have more of a voice in that district.

**David Bodine**, a farmer in Idaho County, then indicated that his district is the district from hell. He reminded the commission that they are not to divide counties, and to please put together a district that has a maintained highway connecting it. He would rather have urban and rural folks in one district than have a district that is geographically enormous. He stated that even though he lives in a rural area they are sophisticated and can get along with city folks. When the legislature passes laws, they don't pass laws that affect only farmers, they affect everybody. He stated that everyone will have to learn to work together, and suggested that rural people will have to start running for political positions.

Next to testify was **Bobbi Bodine** who lives in Legislative District 8. She stated that she has served on some school boards and agrees with Commissioner Brandt that if the commission is to divide counties that Idaho County has a logical divide at the river. She indicated that the river, which is also the time zone change, is a natural division as the southern end of county gets different news, and goes to different doctors, etc.

**Chuck Cuddy** then advised the commission of the importance of keeping an urban and rural mix in the legislature. He also asked the commission to look at areas of common interest, and to keep the tribal boundaries whole.

**Jan Two Bears Falcon** was next called and advised that she did not wish to testify at this time.

**George Truppi** was next called and indicated that he did not wish to speak.

Next to address the commission was **Thyra Stevenson**, a member of the City Council in Lewiston. She advised that she appreciates the idea of keeping counties whole and suggested that adding Nez Perce County would be ideal to make the numbers work. She also indicated that she did not feel that the time zone or the requirement that the districts be connected by state roads is as important as some of the other concepts. **Ms. Stevenson** emphasized the similar communities of interest in Lewiston and Moscow, and indicated that if it was necessary to separate Nez Perce County it should be added to Moscow so they would have a voice. She also suggested that cutting the heights area of Lewiston would be possible. She agrees with the idea of putting the tribe in one district so their voice is not diluted.

**Joy Hall**, who lives in Pierce, in Clearwater County, was next to testify. She indicated that just because people from the rural areas shop in Lewiston that doesn't mean they are the same. She urged the commission to consider rural vs. urban communities of interest when drawing the district lines because there is a big difference in their experiences.

As there were no further names on the signup sheet, **Chairman Andersen** opened the floor to anyone else who would wish to testify.

**Matthew Carlson** then asked that the City of Lewiston not be divided. He also indicated that he doesn't want Boise divided in the congressional districts and would like all cities kept whole, including their areas of impact. Further he suggested that the commission combine some urban areas with rural areas in the Lewiston area. Lewiston is a hub for county residents.

**Pete Gerlonson** again addressed the commission, and advised that he used to live in the Orchards area in Lewiston. Lewiston wanted to annex the Orchards in the 1950s. He considers himself urban AND rural and an Idahoan, and that's how Idaho is. It's wrong that people with postage-stamp sized yards have a different mentality is just wrong. He doesn't feel that there is much difference between the people in rural and urban areas. **Commissioner Moses** expressed his appreciation for hearing comments on what we have in common and not what divides us.

**LuAnn Cullen**, then advised the commission that the people of Riggins want to be with the people in Idaho County.

**Commissioner Moses** then indicated that Idaho is one of the most open states to citizens in the redistricting process and challenged the audience to go onto the website and draw just 7 districts to appreciate the complexity of the commission's task. He then asked that if they are happy with what they have drawn to submit it for the commission's consideration.

**Chairman Andersen** then adjourned the meeting at 8:53.